DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 272 JC 020 479

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TITLE	Community Colleges as Primary Skill Developers and Labor Market Intermediaries: Fresno City College.
INSTITUTION	New School Univ., New York, NY. Community Development Research Center.; Massachusetts Univ., Boston. Mauricio Gaston Inst. for Latino Community Development and Public Policy.
SPONS AGENCY	Employment and Training Administration (DOL), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-06-00
NOTE	36p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.newschool.edu/milano/cdrc/research.html.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Community Colleges; *Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Legislation; *Educationally Disadvantaged; English (Second Language); High School Equivalency Programs; *Job Training; Legislation; Poverty Programs; Two Year Colleges; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Reform; Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Fresno City College CA

ABSTRACT

This document describes the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, which California instituted in response to the 1996 federal welfare-to-work legislation. The CalWORKs program also has the mandate to develop employment opportunities for welfare students. Community colleges are required to spend their CalWORKs funds in five different areas: childcare, work/study, curriculum development and redesign, job development, and coordination. Approximately 4,000 students at Fresno City College (FCC) are welfare recipients. Many of these students are in their early 20s, lack a high school diploma, and have limited work histories. The FCC CalWORKs program provides academic counseling, classes, and individual plan assessment to an average of 640 CalWORKs students annually. It also screens and matches students with local employers. Through collaboration with several organizations, FCC CalWORKs generated funds to expand student services by creating eight vocational training centers situated in different local communities. Prior to enactment of welfare reform, welfare students were allowed to participate in programs that lasted up to two and a half years. Now that the programs have been shortened, new approaches have been put into practice at FCC, including 18-day, 36-day, and 56-day segments in the Business Division which offer Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Achievement. (Contains 21 references.) (NB)

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Community Colleges as Primary Skill Developers and Labor Market Intermediaries: Fresno City College

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Employment and Training Administration
Office of Employment and Training Programs
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Summary

Fresno City College has become an important labor market intermediary through its long standing collaboration with the Fresno County Human Service System. The Fresno City College California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program provides academic counseling, classes, and individual plan assessment to an average of 640 CalWORKs students annually. The academic programs offered to CalWORKs clients mainstream students into Fresno City College's Vocational Training Programs. The CalWORKs program also has the mandate to develop employment opportunities for welfare students. It, therefore, screens and matches students with local employers.

Fresno Community College is also becoming the primary skill developer for several communities in the city of Fresno. The college already has a long tradition of providing vocational instruction to diverse communities. The successful Fresno City College Vocational Training Center has been offering open entry vocational courses for almost two decades and the Fresno City College Refugee Job Center, in operation for the last 7 years, provides job acquisition skills to members of the Southeast Asian community. Similarly, the on-campus office of Disabled Students Programs and Services, which was established in 1970 as the Enabler Program, provides support to students with learning, physical, and psychological disabilities beyond those offered to mainstream students.

More recently, Fresno City College has developed short-term certification programs to respond to the needs of welfare clients and other disadvantaged students. Currently, the college's main campus offers seven short-term vocational programs in the areas of business, health, and in the social sciences. The college also offers three short-term programs in the Manchester Educational

Resource Center, a one-stop training center near the college, and auto-mechanics and office support techniques at its Vocational Training Center. Courses for these programs are offered at two- or three-month intervals or, as is the case at the Vocational Training Center, in the open entry/open exit modality. Most of the courses in these programs can earn college transferable credits towards an Associate's degree at the college.

Further, through collaboration with the Fresno Leadership Foundation, the Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission, the Housing Authority, and the Local Organizing Committee, FCC CalWORKs generated funds to expand student services by creating eight vocational training centers situated in different local communities. These neighborhood centers provide education and training and assist participants with job placement. All training is designed under a short-term open entry structure to fit the 32 hours of activity required, in accord with Welfare-to-Work guidelines, by CalWORKs employment contracts. The program provides neighborhood job coaches who refer neighbors in need of training, job placement, and post-employment support. One of these neighborhood centers, a newly opened one-stop training center called the Manchester Educational Resource Center and located in a shopping mall close to the college campus, has attracted a number of students and also the support of some segments of the business community. While these training centers are relatively new, their development represents a necessary step towards extending the comprehensive level of services offered at the university to the surrounding communities.

Colleges as Primary Skill Developers and Labor Market Intermediaries: Fresno City College

1. Introduction

Fresno City College, located in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, opened in 1910. Fresno City College offers Associate in Arts or Science degrees in more than 100 major courses of study. The college also offers training in over 60 vocational programs, awards certificates of achievement and certificates of completion. The college includes the Vocational Training Center which offers open entry 20-30 week vocational programs and the Training Institute that provides skill-based training to individuals and customized training to local businesses. The college also offers academic and personal assistance to all students through several offices located in the Student Services Area. Some of those services include financial aid, counseling, disabled student services, health services, psychological services, assessment testing, re-entry services, and outreach. Over the years, the college has grown to more than 40 buildings located on a 103-acre campus. These buildings include the science building, a full-scale theatre, and a business education complex. Recent improvements to the college library include the addition of a computer lab, a tutorial lab, and a specialized lab designed to assist disabled students.[1] FCC has an enrollment of more than 19,000 full- and part-time students and nearly 700 full- and part-time faculty members.

Fresno City College has had a long-standing association with local social service agencies. In fact, the Fresno City College Independence Center has operated as a joint venture of the college and the Fresno County Human Services System since 1987. According to Cathy Barabe, the former Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program coordinator, a forerunner of the

[1] Fresno City College. A campus of the State Center Community College District. http://www.scccd.cc.ca.us/fcc/fcc/htm.

current CalWORKs program, the collaboration efforts of the college with the Department of Human Services started in 1988. This collaborative effort, which brought case managers from the Department of Human Services to the campus, was financed by a $300,000 contract. This contract also allowed for the provision of other ancillary services, such as study skills and group dynamics classes for clients. According to Ms. Barabe, one of the achievements of this work was the mainstreaming of welfare clients in the college, which in turn allowed for a more targeted academic advising for these students. Currently, the Independence Center operates under a grant to provide counseling, skill training, and individual plan assessment to CalWORKs students. The program serves approximately 640 CalWORKs students a year. According to Dr. Janice Emerzian, Director of Disabled Students Programs and Services and Interim Director of the Manchester Educational Resource Center, approximately 4,000 students, or 20 percent of the student body, are CalWORKs clients.

Fresno City College responded to the time-limit requirements on CalWORKs students, brought about by Welfare-to-Work legislation, by promoting the creation of certifications in the area of business that could be earned in a shorter time. According to former GAIN program coordinator, Ms. Barabe, by condensing several programs, the college was able to respond to the need for a short-term training program. Thus, the college was able to offer a twelve-month Child Development program, Building Maintenance training, and a Creative Food Service certificate. While in those early days, there were only a few short term certifications offered, currently, Fresno Community College offers twelve to thirteen short-term certifications. The new certifications include Accounting, Business Office Assistance, and Customer Relations Specialist offered through the Business Division, and Multi-Skilled Health Technician, Child Development, and Creative Food Professional, offered through the Health Science or the Social Science

Division. The duration of these programs range from fourteen weeks to eighteen months, with the majority of programs lasting an average of seven months.[2] In addition to these programs, which are located either at the Fresno Community College Campus or at the nearby Manchester Educational Resource Center, the college also offers five- to eight-month long open entry/open exit programs at their Vocational Training Center. The Vocational Training Center provides short term certificates in General Office Techniques, Computerized Accounting, Auto Collision Repair, Brakes, Suspension and Steering, Engine Performance, and Warehouse Technician.[3] Students enrolled in the short-term courses at the college, at the Manchester Center, and at the Vocational Training Center can earn college credits for some if not all the courses taken as part of these programs.

The role of Fresno City College as a primary skill development agency in the city came about as a result of the collaboration with several partners. The most obvious institutional collaboration exists between Fresno City College and the Fresno Department of Human Services. This association has been long-standing, and dates back to 1988 when the college and the Department of Human Services negotiated a contract that brought case managers to the campus. More recently, Fresno City College CalWORKs received a Welfare-to-Work grant to develop the Fresno Neighborhood Job Network, involving the development of eight new neighborhood employment and training centers. The Fresno Neighborhood Job Network is the product of a collaborative effort involving partnerships with the Fresno Faith Leadership Foundation, the Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission (FCEOC), the Housing Authority, Stone Soup, FIRM, and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The Faith Leadership Foundation is a community-based organization, the FCEOC is a non-profit agency with an

[2] Fresno City College Welfare to Work 1999 Short Term Vocational Program. Class Schedule and Contact Information Sheet.

annual budget of over $33 million, that offers 36 programs designed to develop the self-sufficiency skills of low-income and disadvantage populations.[4]

According to Dr. Emerzian, Interim Director of the Manchester Educational Resource Center, these new neighborhood employment and training centers, located in eight underprivileged communities, are designed to service clients referred by the Department of Human Services. This program must provide a job tailoring activity that addresses job readiness, job placement, and post-employment services as required by CalWORKs.[5] Clients referred to the centers will then meet with a counselor and a job specialist. These meetings will serve to clarify the needs and interests of the client in a "customer oriented" approach to service. Counselors working at the job centers are trained as part of a program of Guidance Studies, lasting approximately three months. These three-month training modules prepare counselors to work as case managers.

Upon agreement, the customer and the job specialist will sign a formal document, the employment contract, leading to the customer's enrollment in a class and to working with a neighborhood job coach. At this point the job coach becomes the central person in the delivery of services since job coaches are entrusted with the responsibility of visiting clients at home. Neighborhood job coaches must speak the customer's language. A large number of hard-to-serve clients speak Vietnamese, Spanish, or are African American and neighborhood job coaches are expected to speak these languages or have expertise working in these communities. Participants then select a short-term training program conducted at the neighborhood center.

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[3] Fresno City College Vocational Training Center 1999 Brochure and Class Schedule.
[4] Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission. Http://www.bizpage.com/business/eoc.html
[5] The CalWORKs Program. Independence Center/CalWORKs Program. Http://www.fcc.cc.ca.us/counseling/calworks.htm

Classes must fit into the 32 hours of activity, as required by their employment contract, and must include placement into an entry-level job. The courses offered by the job centers are significantly different from high school level courses because they are more geared toward finding employment, and are, therefore, responding to the interest of the clients and the needs of the job market. Fresno City College rotates training classes and programs to all sites and all training takes the form of short-term open entry/open exit classes. Some of the college courses offered include Health Care Aid, In-Home Day Care, Child Development, Apartment Management, Starting Your Own Small Business, Protection Services, and Building Maintenance.[6]

Once customers reach a stage of job readiness a job developer works with them to find jobs in the communities. The neighborhood job centers stay in touch with customers for the next three months as part of a process of support and follow-up. Through the whole process, the job centers focus on outcomes. As such, it is projected that the job centers will place 2,000 customers. For those customers who are unable to find employment ("fall through the cracks") the college offers a series of tests and services designed to deal with personal problem or possible disabilities.

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[6] The CalWORKs Program. Independence Center/CalWORKs Program. Http://www.fcc.cc.ca.us/counseling/calworks.htm

2. Counseling and Support Services

Welfare clients enrolled at Fresno City College receive an array of services including employment and career counseling, child care, transportation, career planning, employment assistance and job placement from the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWORKs) offices located on the college campus. To be eligible, students must qualify to receive a Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) grant. TANF students have received support at the college level since 1985, when the Greater Avenue for Independence (GAIN) program was initiated at the college. Currently, CalWORKs students are enrolled in college courses under an employment and training contract with the Fresno County Department of Social Services (DSS). CalWORKs services at Fresno City College are delivered through the Independence Center offices located on campus where college counselors and job developers and a DSS job specialist assist eligible students in moving through their education, obtaining marketable skills, and finding employment.[7] Further, students taking classes at the main college campus also benefit from many of the support services offered to mainstream students enrolled at the college such as the disabled student centers.

Academic Support and Advisement

Some of the services that the college has provided to welfare clients have been changing over time in response to the changing duration of the programs in which these students are enrolled. Prior to the enactment of the welfare reform legislation in 1998, welfare clients enrolled at the college were allowed to participated in educational programs lasting up to two and a half years. Students then were enrolled in study skills and life skills courses along with other academic classes. Students took Guidance Studies classes, Problem Solving, Group Dynamics, Communications, and classes dealing with relationship issues or sexual or domestic abuse. Now

that those programs for welfare clients have been shortened, or new programs of short duration have been created, a new approach has been put in practice. Now each cohort, consisting of approximately 20 to 30 students, is assigned a college counselor whose function is to work with that particular group of students.

Support to Students' Personal Circumstances

According to Laurie Tidyman-Jones, a counselor working with the CalWORKs office located at the main college campus, approximately 4,000 students at Fresno City College are welfare recipients. She describes the profile of many of the welfare clients receiving services through the CalWORKs office as changing. She identifies the welfare client enrolled at Fresno City College as younger, usually in their early twenties, but because of her nine years experience working at the college she recalls that clients at the college used to be older. By and large, she described clients as lacking a high school diploma, and having limited work histories. Ms. Tidyman-Jones speculated that there are not as many South East Asian refugees now on campus because many Laotian and Hmong refugees who had settled in the Fresno area were leaving the area and were moving to the Midwestern states such as Wisconsin.[8]

3. Pedagogy and Curriculum

One of the significant features of Fresno City College is its short-term vocational programs designed for TANF recipients. Short-term vocational courses had been offered at the college for a number of years at the Vocational Training Center which operates as part of the Technical and Industrial Division of Fresno City College. Currently, the Business, Health, and Social Science Division of the college awards Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Achievement for

[7] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule

short-term programs designed within each division specifically to serve the needs of TANF clients. These programs last from six to eight months, and prepare students for jobs in demand locally.

Competencies

According to Dean Sherian Eckenrod, Business Division Associate Dean of Instruction, the realization that many business division students could not participate in a lengthy academic training motivated the creation of the short-term courses. Dean Eckenrod credits former college president, Dr. Bryce Harris, for the impetus behind the creation of a series of short-term certifications in the area of office occupations. Dr. Harris wanted the college to be able to compete with the type of programs offered at private business schools. Consequently, the first class to be shortened was office skills which was offered as a Typing specialty that could be completed in 36 days. Currently the Fresno Center Community College District awards Typing Certificates at City College and at four other locations on a weekly basis and at very low cost.[9]

Following that first successful experience, other short-term certifications were created. These short-term certifications were created by dividing longer classes into discreet competencies that the college could certify. Currently, the Business Division offers Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Achievement in three short-term programs, Business Account Clerk, Business Office Assistant, and Customer Relations Specialist. Competencies for these programs such as Business Math or Intro to Computers have been divided into 1-unit 18-day segments. Competencies requiring a longer time to master, such as Applied Accounting or Office Skill Labs, are comprised of one to three units and are scheduled in 36- or 56-day segments. The Business

[8] For an article detailing the nature of Hmong mobility see Arax, Mark. "Hmong Seek Better Life in Exodus from State." *Los Angeles Times.* Sunday November 10, 1996

Account Clerk and the Office Assistant programs are structured in such a way that those students receive 108 days of in-class training and 36 days of on-the-job training. Classes in these programs are scheduled six hours a day, eighteen days per month, during six months. Upon completing these eight-month programs, students receive a Fresno City College Certificate of Completion. Students enrolled in the Customer Relations Specialist program receive 90 days of in-class training and 36 days of on-the-job training. Classes for this program are also scheduled six hours a day, eighteen days per month for five months and, upon completion of the six-month training, students receive a Fresno City College Certificate of Achievement. Each of these classes, specifically designed for short-term programs, is grouped in the Business and Technology area. It receives the BT designation in the college catalog and in many cases the catalog specifies that the class is a component of a larger class.[10] According to Dean Eckenrod, many of these courses lead directly to an entry-level job when those employers with whom students performed their on-the-job training hire students. In other cases, these classes help students get jobs when they go out looking for work equipped with their new skills.

The Business Division of the college tries to further integrate the training they provide through their short-term courses with their more mainstream classes by setting up evening business classes for graduates with Certificates of Achievement. During the Fall sessions almost every single class in the Business and Technology area, the category under which the short term programs are concentrated, is offered morning and evening either at the main campus or at the nearby Manchester Job Center. A few classes are also offered on Saturdays. [11]

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[9] Fresno City College. Fresno Center Community College Typing Certificates. 1999.
[10] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule
[11] Dean Sherian Eckenrod and Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule.

As a result of the inclusion of the short-term programs, the Business Division expanded their number of programs and faculty. The Business Division continued offering regular semester classes along with the short-term certifications. By and large, full-time faculty teaches regular semester-long business classes, since they prefer to teach the eighteen-week semester courses, but the creation of short-term certifications required the hiring of adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty were initially reluctant to teach the short-term courses and the Dean of the Division was not willing to effect a poor match between unhappy instructors and short-term course students but adjunct faculty were more willing to participate in new programs. This situation began to change a year later, particularly when the eighteen-week business courses experienced a decrease in enrollment and full-time faculty became more amenable to teach short-term courses.

Context Learning

Fresno City College offers an example of context learning at the Fresno City College Vocational Training Center. This center, in operation for over two decades, stresses the acquisition of practical skills through a "hands-on" approach. The center provides training in a series of skills identified by its staff as most in demand by local industry. All the classes, which include General Office Techniques, Engine Performance, or Building Maintenance, are taught in an environment that closely resembles actual jobs.[12] As such, the Auto Collision Repair instructor as well as the students, for instance, wears shop clothes and students learn by repairing real cars under the supervision of instructors and more experienced students. Likewise, students enrolled in the Office Assistant classes must dress and are socialized into the office environment along with the job-specific instruction.

The training programs offered by the Vocational Training Center are usually from seven to thirty weeks long, and are designed in partnership with local industry. According to their own brochure, classes at the center are available for all levels of academic achievement. As a minimum, however, most classes require a third to fifth grade reading level, while more advanced classes such as Computerized Accounting or Engine Performance require a ninth grade reading level. The classes are offered morning and evenings, in an open entry modality, there is no tuition, and orientation sessions are held every Monday at 9 am.[13]

4. Program Design

The programs that Fresno City College offers to welfare clients are significantly different from courses offered to mainstream students. The college has developed a series of short-term vocational courses in the areas of business, health science, and the social sciences credited by college certifications. Courses for welfare clients are offered at the main college campus, at the Manchester Center, and at the Vocational Training Center, and feature flexible entry modalities. Vocational courses at the Vocational Training Center are offered in a Open Entry modality starting on a weekly basis, while selected courses at the main college campus and at the Manchester Center are offered at one, two, or three month intervals.

These courses are designed to help students obtain entry-level jobs and as such they are particularly appropriate for disadvantaged students. In addition some of these courses can count as college credits depending on the course and the level.

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[12] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule
[13] Fresno City College 1999 Vocational Training Center Brochure.

Block Scheduling, Shorter Classes

For the last several years, the college has been developing a series of courses that respond to the needs of students for job training that allows them immediate entry into the labor market. For instance the Associate Dean of Instruction for the Business Division, Sherian Eckenrod, highlighted the shortening of several office support classes. According to Dean Eckenrod, the needs of the students gave the Dean of her division the impetus to request the creation of a series of short-term certificates that could give students specific job-related skills they could use to enter the labor market. By dividing larger courses into smaller segments and then further defining a series of competencies that the college could test and certify, the business division was able to offer a series of business certifications that could also lead to an Associate's degree in Business. For the 1999 academic year, the short-term vocational programs offered by the Business Division include the Account Clerk course and the Business Office Assistance course, both lasting eight months at thirty hours per week and are offered at the college campus and at the Manchester Center. The division also offers a thirty hour per week, seven-month long Customer Relations Specialist course at the Manchester Center. Similarly, Dean Gerry Stokle, Associate Dean of Instruction in the Social Science Division has been involved in the creation of shortened courses leading to certifications on Child Development. The short-term vocational programs offered by the Social Science Division are only offered at the college campus and vary in duration. For instance the Child Development Pre-School Program lasts eighteen months, while the Child Development course lasts five months at twenty hours per week, and the Creative Food Professional course lasts six months at twenty-four to thirty-six hours per week. These certifications in the business and child development divisions are also to be expanded and offered at the job community centers that the college is setting up in different communities.

The approach builds on the experience of the Vocational Training Center, a satellite of Fresno City College, started in the 1970s and very much in operation today. The Vocational Training Center is a free program, but students are eligible to receive financial assistance. It is structured in an open entry/open exit modality and, according to Mr. Jerry Sall, Program Coordinator of the center, there are usually twenty-five new people coming to the center to start instruction. According to Mr. Sall close to 70 percent of students are referred by local city agencies. The program offers orientation, assessment, financial assistance, and courses in a series of areas that include General Office Techniques, Computerized Accounting, Auto Collision Repair, Engine Performance, Building Maintenance, and Maintenance Mechanic.

These courses are offered in the morning, from 8 a.m. to 1:50 p.m., or in the afternoon from 2 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and last, on average, from ten to thrity weeks. For instance, the Warehouse Technician course lasts only ten weeks, the Auto Collision Repair course lasts thirty weeks, while most other courses last twenty weeks. Classes emphasize hands-on-training. In the case of the Auto Collision Repair, students work on the cars of real clients who bring their cars to the training center. Students of this class work under the supervision of experienced instructors and receive the assistance of more experienced students. Students work on vehicles free of charge except for the cost of parts. According to the program coordinator, the participation of experienced students in the supervision and teaching has a positive impact in the self-esteem of these students. Further, he pointed out that the program tries to reproduce as much as possible the real conditions of real jobs. Auto Repair instructors, for instance, dress as regular repair shop supervisors and students are socialized into the expectation of the shop in terms of dress and with regards to work habits. Likewise, those enrolled in General Office Techniques, Office Assistance, or Computerized Accounting must dress in regular office suits and dresses.

Instructors in these classes also conduct classes and practices dressed as if they were operating in a business situation. This level of socialization into the work culture, along with skills training and program connection to employers, has proven extremely helpful to non-mainstream entry level workers seeking to enter the labor market and maintain stable employment.[14] The Vocational Training Center also offers job placement services, and overall the center boasts a 97 percent placement rate.[15] [16]

Program for Hispanics

The Fresno City College CalWORKs Programs are not designed to serve the needs of Hispanic clients specifically. The programs are designed to focus on the non-traditional, hard to serve persons living in the different communities of the city of Fresno. By and large, however, Fresno City College has run for the last ten years a Vocational Training Center that serves a large percentage of Latino, Hmong, and African American students. Similarly, the Refugee Job Center, operating in the city of Fresno's Asian American community, offers services primarily to the large Hmong population living in the area. The Hmong are members of rural communities displaced by the war in Cambodia. Many of the Hmong were trained and supported by US forces to work in support of US efforts in South East Asia. [17]

Nevertheless, according to government figures for the year 1990, the Hispanic population in Fresno County represents almost 40 percent of the total population of 737,289, or 231,853 individuals. The same government information indicates that there are 21,000 Hispanic families earning less than $20,000 a year. This may be explained by the educational attainment of

[14] For a discussion of a successful skill-training program working with hard-to-serve entry level workers see Meléndez (1996). Working on Jobs: The Center for Employment Training. Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy.
[15] Interview with Jerry Sall, VTC Program Coordinator.

Hispanics. Among those Hispanics 25 years old or older only approximately 5 percent have earned an Associate's degree, and approximately 4 percent have a Bachelors degree. Approximately 19 percent of those 25 years old or older had graduated from high school or obtained high school equivalence.[18]

The demographic distribution of AFDC clients for the year 1997 reflects the composition of the county with Hispanics slightly over represented. Out of a total of 108,250 AFDC clients 48.6 percent (or 52,610 individual) were of Hispanic origin, 17 percent (or 18,403 individuals) were Hmong, 14.1 percent (or 15,263 individuals) were Caucasian, 11.1 percent (or 12,015 individuals) were African American, with Cambodian and Laotian representing 3.3 and 3.2 percent respectively.[19]

Dedicated vs. Integrated Programs

The Fresno City College Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program, the forerunner of the current CalWORKs program, established the collaboration of the college with the Department of Human Services starting in 1987. This collaborative effort, which brought case managers from the Department of Human Services to the campus, achieved the mainstreaming of welfare clients into the university.[20] From those early days what was to become the CalWORKs program was designed as an integrated program and sought to mainstream welfare students into Fresno City College vocational training programs. Currently that design is somewhat altered by the different modalities of training offered by the college in the several locations where education and training is taking place and by the time limits required by the

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[16] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule
[17] Podger, Pamela. "Hmongs Fight Language Barriers to Aid." *The Fresno Bee*. March 5, 1997
[18] USA Counties. Fresno County California. Http://govinfo.library.orst.edu.
[19] Fresno County Human Services System 1997 Client Profile.

Welfare-to-Work legislation. TANF students taking courses at the college can take advantage of a series of college services and select classes from the general catalog specifically designed for them. To the extent that these programs are integrated as part of the college, students receiving public assistance are also part of the mainstreaming efforts of the institution. Thus, students graduating from short-term programs may continue taking classes at the college towards an Associate's degree either in the morning, evening or on Saturdays. That is much less the case for students taking short-term classes at the Vocational Training Center, the Refugee Center, or the new neighborhood training centers where the focus seems much more on job acquisition. In the case of the Vocational Training Center, the Refugee Center and the neighborhood training centers, which includes the Manchester Educational Resource Center, the structure of the services resembles much more that of self-contained dedicated programs. The number of programs is more limited and the connection to the larger institution is further removed.

5. Career Ladders

There are several ways in which the college assists students' efforts to get jobs leading to stable employment and career advancement. All the short-term term programs are structured in a way that requires an on-the-job training component. According to Dean Eckenrod, employers hire many students enrolled in the short-term business programs after they can see their performance through on-the-job training. The success of the Vocational Training Center, on the other hand, has more to do with their training approach, such as context learning as well as the hiring of instructors still working in local companies. This association with local employers makes the Vocational Training Center part of the employers' recruiting network.

[20] Discussion with Cathy Barabe, former GAIN program director.

Links Between Program, College, and Industry

The office of CalWORKs located on the campus of Fresno City College is responsible for providing welfare clients enrolled at the college with a work study component to the training they receive. They are also responsible for job placements for those clients. According to Kim Cole, a job developer who has been working at Fresno City College for the last two years, part of her responsibility as a job developer consists of placing students in a CalWORKs work-study program. She feels that local employers are encouraged to take in participating students because of the 75 percent salary reimbursement they receive from CalWORKs for the on-the-job training they provide in the form of work-study hours. She added that since many students are only required to work 26 hours in order to fulfill work requirements, they can work the equivalent of a part time job. According to Laurie Tidyman-Jones, a CalWORKs counselor who has been working at the college for the last nine years, the demographic and socio-economic changes are the reason for changes in the college. She indicated that currently almost one-third of students receive public assistance.

In an effort to extend services to the community, Fresno City College opened on January 1999 the 11,335 square foot Manchester Educational Resource Center, a one-stop training center, on the second floor of the Fresno's Manchester Shopping Center. The shopping center is located near the main campus of the college, in a central location, near major bus routes and within close access to two freeways. The Manchester Educational Resource Center offers a series of short-term programs leading to certifications in Business, Social Science and the Humanities. It also offers job search training and career counseling. The center is equipped with three computer labs, where students can apply newly acquired computer skills to build resumes and find jobs. Class sizes tend to be small, usually from twenty to twenty-five people, to allow more

interactions with instructors. This approach seems to work well for students returning to the college or those inexperienced with college life. With the creation of the Manchester Resource Center, Fresno City College hopes to strengthen its connection with local employers, in particular with the retail stores operating down the hall.[21] There is in fact strong evidence of support from the business community. Around the corner from the resource center office there is a shop where students graduating from any of the programs offered at the center can obtain, free of charge, any business office type of clothing in order to attend their first job interviews or start a new job properly outfitted. The suits and assorted clothing are provided by a local business.

The college also runs the Fresno City College Refugee Job Center located in a predominantly Southeast Asian community. This center has been in operation for close to seven years and came into existence as a response to the high unemployment and concomitant high level of depression and alcoholism experienced by this community. Funding for the Refugee Job Center was provided by a grant from two agencies, JTPA and the New Americans Job TraininProgram, and developed by then GAIN program director, Cathy Barabe. One full-time and four part-time job developers from Laotian, Cambodian, and Caucasian backgrounds staff the center. The Refugee Job Center was initially conceived to serve the needs of Southeast Asian clients but now the center is open to everyone although the majority of clients come from the Hmong community. For the last few years the center has provided services to 500 to 600 clients although recently those numbers have decreased to almost half, primarily as a result of relocations. In fact, almost 50 percent of the Hmong population have been relocated to areas in North Carolina and Minnesota.[22] This relocation responds to the initial success of the relocation

[21] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule.
[22] Arax, Mark. "Hmong Seek Better Life in Exodus from State." *Los Angeles Times.* November 10, 1996.

efforts now promoted by JTPA. Nevertheless, the center focuses primarily on job acquisition. Although, there are many circumstances that operated as barriers to employment, such as substance abuse and domestic violence, there was no provision to add counseling as one of the services provided by the job center. Further, within the Hmong community, personal problems are dealt with by the elderly of that community. This practice precludes the involvement of non-Hmong counselors.

Hot Programs

Amongst the 60 vocational programs that Fresno City College offers to its mainstream population, the college considers its Dental Hygiene and its Radiology program to qualify as hot programs, that is the programs that have the highest demand in the local labor market. Graduates of these programs are often hired as soon as they graduate. Fresno City College also offers short-term certifications, which include Accounting, Business Office Assistance, and Customers Relations Specialist offered through the Business Division, and Multi-Skilled Health Technician, Child Development, and Creative Food Professional, offered through the Health Science or the Social Science Division. In addition to these programs, which are located either at the Fresno Community College Campus or at the nearby Manchester Educational Resource Center, the college also offers five to eight month open entry/open exit programs at their Vocational Training Center. The Vocational Training Center provides short term certificates in General Office Techniques, Computerized Accounting, Auto Collision Repair, Brakes, Suspension and Steering, Engine Performance, and Warehouse Technician.[23] These are all programs specifically designed for TANF clients and, as such, they are geared towards entry-level job

[23] Fresno City College Vocational Training Center 1999 Brochure and Class Schedule.

acquisition. By and large the program most in demand amongst this group is the Warehouse Technician.[24]

6. University/College/Program Leadership

Some of the innovations taking place at Fresno City College have been a long time coming. For starters, there is the nearly twenty year experience of the Vocational Training Center, where open entry courses and context vocational training have resulted in a very high graduation and employment rate. The experience of the GAIN program in designing short-term courses and supplementing skill acquisition with extensive support services has now been extended to several departments in the college. Disabled Student Services have been another model for the development of training programs geared to non-mainstream students. Finally, the collaboration of the college and the social services agencies has also been long standing. It is perhaps this history of services and innovations, most of which are promoted at the level of the departments, that has led to the combination of circumstances that make Fresno City College exemplary as a primary skill developer and labor intermediary in the city of Fresno. It is interesting to note in this context that the program coordinator of FCC Vocational Training Center and the coordinator of the Refugee Job Center both credit the role of former GAIN program director Ms. Barabe as the key person spearheading some of the changes now common in the college. In turn, Dean Sherian Eckenrod, Business Division Associate Dean of Instruction, credits former college president, Dr. Bryce Harris, for the impetus behind the creation of a series of short-term certifications in the area of office occupations. According to Dean Eckenrod, Dr. Harris wanted the college to be able to compete with the type of programs offered at private business schools, and was instrumental in the development of the Typing specialty that could be completed in 36

[24] College response to the Survey on Welfare-to-Work Initiatives at Community Colleges conducted by our research team on October 1998.

days. Currently the Fresno Center Community College District not only awards Typing Certificates at City College, and at four other locations, but offers short-term certifications in three different business programs.

Finally, Dr. Janice Emerzian, Director of Disabled Students Program and Services, and Interim Director of the Community Centers, credits the new president of the college Dr. Daniel Larios for the reorganization then taking place at the college. Dr. Emerzian, explained that the new president, who came to the college only two years ago, has shown a profound commitment and motivation to respond to the changing demographic profile of students and faculty. According to Dr. Emerzian, the new president had expressed the need for the college to connect with the students in many different ways, and that this need gave way to the vision for the development of the neighborhood job centers.

7. State Welfare-to-Work Legislation

The state of California has provided public assistance for children since 1855. In 1900, California established rules and regulations for the support of needy children. The 1935 Social Security Act paved the way for the Aid to Needy Children Program which was instituted July 1, 1936. The name of the program was changed in 1963 to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). This change reflected an emphasis on working with the entire family. AFDC provided an income maintenance entitlement program to families and children who were deprived of support or care. This 61-year old program of federal welfare entitlement has now been repealed and replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). TANF is a federal block grant that provides nearly $16.4 billion annually through the year 2002 to the states to partially fund their welfare programs. The proposed rules reflect new federal and state relationships in the

administration of temporary assistance programs. The shared focus is moving participants into work.

This new era of state and federal partnership began on August 22, 1996, when President Bill Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Public Law 104-193). This sweeping welfare reform law requires states to design and implement their own welfare programs, replacing the former federal AFDC program. The 1996 law assumes permanent reform but establishes block grant funding levels and guidelines for only the first six years. Nearly two-dozen states have enacted significant welfare reform measures in the past two years. Most reform-minded states are rethinking the welfare model altogether. Twenty-nine states require "personal contracts" with recipients with penalties for noncompliance. Twenty states are experimenting with "family caps." Thirty-one states have restricted and revised benefits for minor parents. Twenty-six states have established benefit time limits. The freedom afforded by block grants can allow states to streamline welfare programs, reduce waste and duplication and serve more people with less money. The state of California has allowed each county to develop and implement their individual welfare reform program within the legal guidelines set down by the state.

The changes to Employment Services included replacing the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program with the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWORKs) Employment Services. The GAIN Program was a participant-driven program that allowed recipients some choice in reaching their employment goals, while providing penalties for those individuals who did not follow through with program requirements. Fresno County was the first county in California to implement the GAIN program in June 1986. The GAIN program had

a total of 38,601 registrants in 1997. Of this total, 10,596 found employment.[25] The CalWORKs program transformed GAIN to a time-limited welfare-to-work focused program, which expanded participation requirements. CalWORKs is a state funded cash assistance program, established to assist needy children. Criteria for eligibility include absence, disability, death, or unemployment of either or both parents. Other criteria include property, income, residency in California, and age of the children. Effective January 1, 1998 CalWORKs implemented a cumulative 60 month lifetime limit on receiving cash aid benefits, and made participation in work activities mandatory. Participants can receive assistance and supportive services for 24 months and applicants for 18 months. If at the end of this time period they are not employed, and no job is available, participants are placed in a community service job for the remainder of their 60 months of eligibility. After a family receives their 60 months of assistance, they will only receive cash aid to needy children. All adult, able-bodied, CalWORKs participants must comply with welfare-to-work requirements, which mandates that starting July 1, 1998 all single parent families must participate in an allowable welfare-to-work activity for a minimum of 26 hours each week. For two-parent families, at least one adult must meet the required 35 hours per week or participate in an allowable work activity. Both parents in a two-parent family may contribute to the 35 hours if one parent is participating at least 20 hours per week.

The California Welfare to Work Act also designated community colleges as important partners in the CalWORKs initiative due to the number of welfare recipients they were already serving and the infrastructure they had available. The state allocated $65 million of its budget to community colleges for them to develop or expand programs and services to CalWORKs participants. The state also allocated $10 million to community colleges in Childcare Facility Grants and another $10 million for non-credit matriculation since many CalWORKs student are in non-credit

[25] Fresno County Human Services System 1997 Client Profile.

classes.[26] Community colleges received an additional $16 million in more multi-purpose TANF funds half of which were provided by the state and from the state Department of Social Services (DSS). The California Community Colleges Chancellor's office is responsible for allocating the funds to the various districts and reporting back to the legislature. Each district received at least $125,000 and at most an amount based on the number of AFDC recipients enrolled in the district in 1996-1997.[27] The first funds were distributed in February 1998.[28] However, most of the funds were available for the 1998-1999 academic year. Fresno City College District received money in CalWORKs and TANF funds, which it allocated to colleges based on their number of welfare recipient students. Community colleges are required to spend their portion of the $65 million in five different areas: childcare, work/study, curriculum development and redesign, job development, and coordination. At least 23 percent of the college's CalWORKs funds must be allocated for child care, at least 28 percent must be spent on work/study. An additional 25 percent of the CalWORKs funds must be allocated for childcare or work-study or, only in restricted circumstances, for instruction. The remaining 24 percent must be divided between curriculum development and redesign, job development and coordination although the specific amounts are left to the colleges' discretion.[29] In 1998-1999 some flexibility of up to 10 and 15 percent was allowed between some of the different CalWORKs funding components.[30] The TANF

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[26] Welfare reform in the community colleges: an update presentation by Thelma Scott-Skillman, Vice Chancellor of Student Services and Special Program of the California Community Colleges. Board of Governors California Community Colleges, March 9-10, 1998.

[27] Chancellor's office of California Community Colleges, Application for CalWORKs and TANF Funding 1998-1998. http://www.cccco.edu/cccco/ss/calworks/cwtfapp.htm

[28] Welfare reform in the community colleges: an update presentation by Thelma Scott-Skillman, Vice Chancellor of Student Services and Special Program of the California Community Colleges. Board of Governors California Community Colleges, March 9-10, 1998.

[29] Chancellor's office of California Community Colleges, Application for CalWORKs and TANF Funding 1998-1998. http://www.cccco.edu/cccco/ss/calworks/cwtfapp.htm

[30] The CalWORKs Prorgam in the California Community Colleges, CCC CalWORKs Fall Workshops, Pasadena, November 2, 1998.

funds are intended to provide community colleges with more flexibility. They can be used for a broad range of costs related to providing support services or instruction for TANF recipients such as "curriculum redesign, special classes (not funded by apportionment), job preparation activities, counseling, career assessment, equipment, student tracking, etc."[31] However, these fund allocation restrictions are not the only elements that determine the kind of programs community colleges develop. The two features of the California Welfare to Work Act which most directly affect the kinds of community college programs welfare recipients can participate in are the new time limits on aid and the work requirements described above.

8. Outcomes

Graduation Rates

For programs designed to enhance the job prospect of participants, graduation is determined by the acquisition of an entry-level job. In that context, the GAIN program has had a certain measure of success. As of 1997, there were a total of 38,601 registrants in Fresno GAIN program. From this total 10,596 or approximately 25 percent obtained unsubsidized employment with an average wage of $5.76. As a result of their earned income 5,705 had their grants reduced and 4,055 had their grants terminated.[32]

Employment Rates and Relations to Employers

Fresno City College offers short-term courses to CalWORKs students in several different settings, each of which have had different levels of success in placing students. The almost two decades running Vocational Training Center is perhaps the most successful boasting a 97

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[31] Chancellor's office of California Community Colleges, Application for CalWORKs and TANF Funding 1998-1998. http://www.cccco.edu/cccco/ss/calworks/cwtfapp.htm

[32] Fresno County Human Services System 1997 Client Profile.

percent placement rate.[33] It is difficult to assess the level of success of the 11,335 square foot Manchester Educational Resource Center, a one-stop training center that had just opened on January 1999. The center offers short-term training, job search training, and career counseling. With the creation of the Manchester Resource Center Fresno City College hopes to strengthen its connection with local employers, in particular with the retail stores operating down the hall.[34] There is in fact strong evidence of support from the business community.

The Fresno City College Refugee Job Center located in a predominantly Southeast Asian community is perhaps a bit less successful. The majority of its clients come from the Hmong community and for the last few years the center has provided services to 500 to 600 clients although recently those numbers have decrease to almost half primarily as a result of relocations. To this date, almost 50 percent of the Hmong population have been relocated to areas in North Carolina and Minnesota.[35] This relocation responds to initial success of the relocation efforts now promoted by JTPA.

9. Conclusion

Fresno City College has taken tremendous steps towards becoming one of the primary skill developers of the area and constituting itself into a significant labor intermediary for the regional economy. Fresno City College has, overtime, enacted a series of innovations that respond to the needs of disadvantaged students, welfare clients, and minority populations. Some of these innovations include the development of short-term programs, their articulation into degree programs, the use of open entry modalities at the Vocational Training Center, and the availability of these innovations to mainstream students. Fresno City College now offers short-term programs in Business, Health Science, and Social Sciences that can be completed in

[33] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule
[34] Fresno City College 1999 Summer-Fall Class Schedule.

six to eight months and grants Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Achievement which are recognized by the business community. Further, by integrating the services of Fresno City College counselors and job developers with the work of CalWORKs case managers the college provides an answer to the training needs of welfare clients.

The on-the-job component of many of these programs connects students to prospective employers who provide entry-level jobs upon graduation. To the extent that these services are integrated as part of the college, programs that serve students receiving public assistance are also part of the mainstreaming efforts of the institution. Mainstreaming the services for welfare clients offers two advantages. First of all, students receiving public assistance can more readily become integrated into regular course work. Thus, students graduating from these short-term program may continue taking classes at the college towards an Associate's degree either in the morning, evening or on Saturdays. Secondly, those services, designed to serve welfare clients, and the innovation of these services are made available to the rest of the student population who benefit from new or innovative pedagogical and organizational approaches.

Having accomplished this level of integration at the college level, the college is poised now to bring comprehensive services to several different Fresno communities. Fresno City College has had experience offering open entry short-term vocational training through its Vocational Training Center and the Refugees' Job Center. At the Vocational Training Center students receive hands-on context learning training in a series of programs ranging from Auto Repair to Office Support and Warehouse Maintenance. At the Refugees' Job Center, located in the South-East Asian community of the city of Fresno, services are provided by Cambodian, Hmong, and Caucasian counselors. The college is currently opening a series of community job centers. The

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[35] Arax, Mark. "Hmong Seek Better Life in Exodus from State." *Los Angeles Times*. November 10, 1996.

one-stop Manchester Educational Resource Center, located a short distance from the college at a Manchester shopping center, is already functioning with relative success. This center, which offers certifications in Business, Health, and Social Sciences along with an array of services, has received much community and business support and the response of the students and level of students' satisfaction seem high. The center is centrally located close to bus routes and two major highways.

Overall, the response of the college to the changing political and economic landscape confronting the city of Fresno is encouraging. The college has met the challenge head-on by developing short-term programs that provide training in those areas more likely to provide disadvantaged students with employment in one of the expanding segments of the local economy. Consequently, the college has become a significant labor intermediary in the local economy. If the successes they have experienced so far are any indication they are poised to make a profound and important contribution to the area of education and training for disadvantaged communities in the Fresno County area.

Individuals Interviewed.

Ernest Smith. FCC. Associate Dean of Students Services, Workforce Development and Special Services.

Janice Emerzian. FCC. Director, Disabled Students Program and Services.

Cathy Barabe. FCC. Former GAIN Coordinator.

Jerry Sall, FCC. Vocational Training Center. Counselor, Program Coordinator.

Kim Cole. FCC. Employment and Training Specialist.

Sherian Eckenrod. FCC. Business Division. Associate Dean of Instruction

Gerry Stokle. FCC. Social Science Division. Associate Dean of Instruction.

Michael Benshoff. FCC Job Center. Job Developer.

Keith Kelly. FCC Job Center. Job Developer

Jason Sherryl. FCC Job Center. Job Developer

Charles Francis. FCC. Interim CalWORKs Director

Sheila Pesch. FCC. Busines Division Instructor. Manchester Educational Resource Center.

Mark Haskell. FCC. Busines Division Instructor. Manchester Educational Resource Center

Jolene Thiessen. FCC. Busines Division Instructor. Manchester Educational Resource Center

Linda Hutcheson. County of Fresno. Staff Analyst. Human Service System. Employment and Temporary Assistance.

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